

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 5-AWASHINGTON TIMES
19 July 1985

Greeks deny refusing asylum to Soviet wife

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Greek Embassy spokesman has denied that the wife of a Soviet defector to the United States sought political asylum in Greece before Soviet authorities arranged her return to Moscow.

But Virginia Tsouderou, a member of the conservative New Democracy Party and a noted human rights activist, has charged that the family of the defector, Sergei Bokane, was in police custody and was not given the option of joining him.

Nikos Papaconstantinou, a Greek Embassy spokesman, dismissed Mrs. Tsouderou's charges as "nonsense."

"All the reports on this are inaccurate and unfounded," Mr. Papaconstantinou said Wednesday. "Mrs. Bokane never asked for political asylum from the Greek government," he said.

If Mrs. Bokane had sought political asylum, she would have made the request while she was at

her residence or as she prepared to leave Athens airport for Moscow, he said. Mr. Papaconstantinou said he did not know if Greek police were guarding the Bokane residence before she left the country.

Prior to his defection to the United States, Mr. Bokane had been first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Athens and a Soviet GRU military intelligence officer.

Last week the State Department confirmed that Mr. Bokane entered the United States voluntarily after defecting in Athens last May 24.

An Athens newspaper, the Athens Star, reported July 4 that Mr. Bokane was providing U.S. intelligence officials with details of Soviet espionage activities in Greece and other parts of the world, including Moscow's involvement in international terrorism.

U.S. officials have placed a tight lid on further details of Mr. Bokane's revelations, fearing terrorist reprisals against Americans and possibly attacks during the Geneva summit between President Reagan and

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev scheduled for November, according to a senior U.S. official.

Knowledgeable Greek sources said the Greek government's Ministry of Public Order was asked by Soviet Embassy officials to place the residence of Mrs. Bokane under police control. Mr. Bokane's wife and 7-year-old daughter were then flown out of Athens on an Aeroflot flight to Moscow.

Mr. Bokane left the Soviet diplomatic compound in Athens on Saturday, May 25, after telling his wife he was going for a walk. For unexplained reasons, his wife reportedly did not report the disappearance until the following Monday. Mr. Bokane's car was found abandoned in a northern section of Athens near Olympic Stadium, according to Greek press accounts.

In a question presented to the Greek Parliament this month, Mrs. Tsouderou demanded the Greek government explain "who was responsible for the immediate surrender of the family of the Soviet

diplomat who was serving in Athens and asked for political asylum in the West."

A copy of Mrs. Tsouderou's statement in Parliament was obtained by The Washington Times.

She charged that denying the family the option of joining Mr. Bokane "is considered a violation of international practices" with regard to those seeking political asylum.

Mrs. Tsouderou raised other questions about the Greek government's policy toward terrorism in her statement. Several questions were directed to the secretary general of the Ministry of Public Order, Constantine Tsimas.

She charged that Mr. Tsimas had vetoed international conventions on terrorism at three conferences in Italy and that he had been trained at a Palestine Liberation Organization training camp in the Middle East.

Mr. Tsimas, at a press conference this month in Athens, reportedly denied having been trained at the PLO camp.